



Session update from Olympia

December 2, 2011



Photo courtesy of Washington State Senate

Special Session Begins

I had the honor to serve as a flag bearer with Senate Minority Leader Mike Hewitt for the ceremonial start of the special session. To read the full story click [here](#).

Demonstrators converge on Capitol grounds

This week we saw the presence of several thousand demonstrators from multiple groups, including several from Spokane, concerned with the potential budget cuts that would be required to make up for the state's revenue shortfall due to the Great Recession.

Groups marched and chanted outside buildings on the Capitol Campus and inside the rotunda and Senate and House galleries of the legislative building on Monday. On Tuesday, a small group of demonstrators disrupted the Senate Ways & Means Committee

Contact Information:

Olympia Office:

307 Legislative Building

By Postal Mail:

Senator Lisa Brown
PO Box 40403
Olympia, WA 98504-0403

By Phone:

Olympia Office: (360) 786-7604

Spokane Office: (509) 456-2760

Toll-free legislative hotline:
1-800-562-6000

TTY/TDD Hearing impaired
hotline: 1-800-635-9993

hearing on the budget and had to be removed so that the committee could continue its work. My statement on the budget committee demonstrations can be read by clicking [here](#).

A win for Washington, 737 MAX goes to Renton

Machinists at The Boeing Company reached an agreement this week with management that will ensure the next generation of the 737 – the bestselling commercial airplane of all time – will be built in Washington.

This is huge, as it locks in a new four-year contract 10 months before the existing contract with workers expires. Boeing is already booked to build 700 of the new jets — ensuring plenty of good-paying jobs in Washington for years to come. Since the start of the recession alone, Boeing has added 3,000 jobs. In Spokane, the Aerospace sector has been an important priority for workforce development. With over 80 Aerospace firms in our region, the building of the 737 MAX in Renton will help ensure that this industry will remain economically vibrant.

You can [read more about the agreement here](#).

Try your hand at balancing the budget

As the Legislature takes up the challenge of balancing the budget in the face of the state's \$1.4 billion shortfall, our state faces a lot of painful choices.

Should we increase school class sizes? Should we eliminate a support program for 15,000 aged, blind and disabled Washingtonians? Should we increase the sales tax? Should we eliminate exemptions to the estate tax?

Today you can play legislator and see what choices you'd make if you were in my shoes. A simple-to-use budget calculator courtesy of the League of Education Voters offers a list of possible cuts and new revenue sources, allowing you to mix and match your way to a balanced budget. [Try it out here](#).

State economy performing as expected

This week the state Economic and Revenue Forecast Council released [an updated economic picture](#) for the state. Earlier drops in the forecast created the roughly \$2 billion budget challenge that brought legislators to special session, but since September Washington has been meeting economic expectations. Highlights of the report include:

- The economy is performing as expected. In the two

E-mail:

lisa.brown@leg.wa.gov

Web site:

<http://senatedemocrats.wa.gov/senators/brown>

For staff contact information click [here](#)

[Web Site](#)

[Contact me](#)

[About the Legislature](#)

months since the September forecast there have been no unpleasant surprises, despite the high level of uncertainty in the baseline.

- The biggest threats to the U.S. economy are the sovereign debt crisis in Europe and political gridlock in Washington D.C.
- Real GDP has returned to its pre-recession peak but it is being produced with 6.6 million fewer jobs. Growth in jobs has been excruciatingly slow in this recovery.
- Construction shows no indication of recovering anytime soon. Housing prices are going through a double-dip and do not appear to have hit bottom yet. A meaningful recovery is not expected until 2013, after home prices start to rise again.
- The manufacturing sector has led the recovery so far but manufacturing growth shows signs of slowing.
- As with the nation, the recovery in Washington continues to muddle along. The biggest threat to the state economy remains the sovereign debt crisis in southern Europe.
- The Washington economy is in for an extended period of weakness but Washington State is expected to outperform the U.S. economy in employment and personal income growth.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, you can contact me via email or through my office. It is a privilege and an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,



Click [here](#) for contact information for my Olympia or Spokane office.